

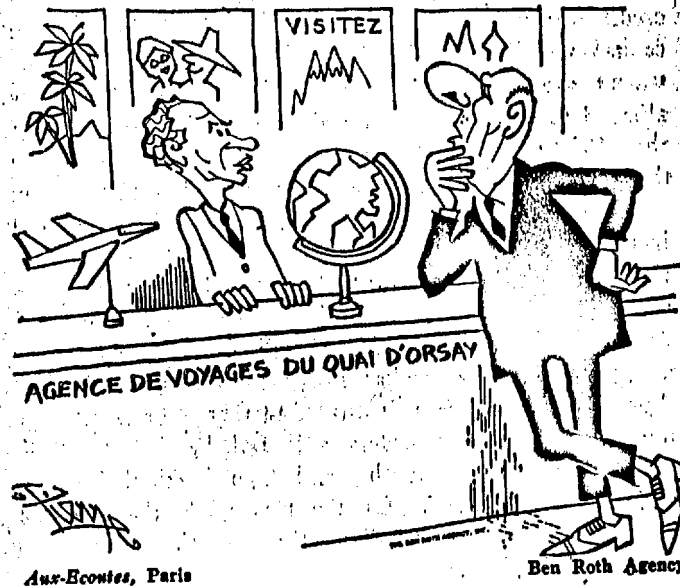
22 November 1966

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CASABLANCA

Ben Barka's Last Mission

The script of the Mehdi Ben Barka trial in Paris has been full of the intricate scandals in high places, frauds, gangsters, crimes within crimes, conspiracies and counter-conspiracies, quadruple agents and enigmas wrapped in mysteries that are traditional in this sort of French production. But there has been a curious lack of public attention to what would surely seem to be of at least possible bearing on what happened: namely, what Ben Barka was up to at the time he disappeared and—it is assumed, though without a corpus delicti or any other direct proof so far presented—met his death. Ben Barka, a leftist exile from Morocco, was completing preparations for his duties as chairman of the Tricontinental Congress scheduled to be held in January 1966 (as it turned out, without benefit of Ben Barka's gavel) in Havana: to which post he had been named by the Congress organizers—that is, by the Communist apparatus. In an article published in *Jeune Afrique*, Ben Barka's brother Abdelkader Ben Barka, reproduced two pages of his journal. In Geneva on Oc-



"Make up a list of the countries that have not yet had the opportunity to acclaim me!"

tober 7, 1965—the last time Abdelkader saw Mehdi—Mehdi had jotted notes concerning the conduct of the Tricontinental Congress, intended for the student, Azem-mouri (with whom he had the appointment for lunch on the day of his disappearance). These notes propose as the first two topics on the Havana agenda: "1) Anti-imperialist struggle (in detail); 2) Hot points of the struggle (Vietnam). . ." They also deal with preparing the "general report" of the Congress, stating that "the analysis made by the 81 Communist Parties in 1960" should be consulted as background "for our point of view."

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